

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-20 are pending in the application. Claims 1-5 and 12-20 have been rejected. Claims 2, 6-11, and 16 have been objected. Claims 1, 2, 6, 15, and 16 have been amended. Claims 1 and 15 are independent claims.

Claims 2 and 16 have been objected for failing to meet proper formalities. Specifically, the Office Action alleges that in both claims, limitation “the axial engagement” should be “an axial engagement.” In response, applicant has amended the claims, replacing “the” with “an.” Accordingly, applicant submits that both claims now meet the formalities, thus applicant respectfully request withdrawal of the objection.

Claims 6-11 stand objected for depending on rejected claim 1. Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for indicating that claims would be allowable if they are rewritten in independent forms including all features of base and any intervening claims. At this time, applicant wishes to defer amending claims 6-11 as indicated in the Office Action. Instead, applicant wishes to amend claim 1 and 15 and submit for reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections.

Claims 1-3, 12-17, and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Grant (U.S. 4,997,142).

With respect to claim 1 and 15, applicant submits that both claims, as amended, recite, *inter alia*, “a guide rib formed on outer surface of the flange, away from the juncture.” Such guide rib, as noted in the specification, prevents optical fibers from bending as the fibers are being spooled. (Page 5, line 20, 21)

Nowhere in Grant teach or show a guide rib. Accordingly, applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of 35 U.S.C. §102(b) rejections with respect to amended claims 1 and 15.

Claims 1-5 and 12-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being obvious over Bocciola (U.S. 6,305,639 B1) in view of Grant (U.S. 4,997,142).

With respect to amended claim 1 and 15, applicant submits that the guide rib is neither taught nor disclosed by Grant. Moreover, Bocciola does not teach or show the guide rib. Accordingly, applicant submits that Bocciola or Grant, alone or in combination, does not render the claims obvious.

Other claims in this application are each dependent on the independent claims and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

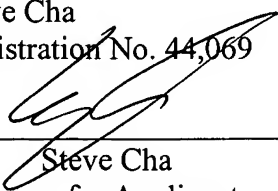
Amendment  
Serial No. 10/694,977

For all of the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the present Application is patentable in view of cited reference. A notice to that effect is respectfully solicited. If any issues remain which may be best resolved through a telephone communication, the Examiner is requested to kindly telephone the undersigned telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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